I. Catalogue Description

This course examines the nature and dimensions of poverty in the United States, considers individual and social consequences of poverty, and examines historic and contemporary approaches to ameliorating poverty including review of major poverty and social welfare policy and programs.

II. Course Overview

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the social science literature on poverty and social welfare in the U.S. context. The first part of the course sets the scene by asking: What is it like to be poor? Has it changed over time? Why do we care? Next, we explore the definitions, effects, and causes of poverty. In the second section of this course, we consider some of the major poverty debates and consider how these issues have been resolved in the past as well as current policies and programs. We address questions such as, how to best aid the poor; should programs be for the poor alone or for all citizens; should different groups (the aged, female heads, the disabled) be treated differently or the same; should aid be provided in cash or in kind; and what level of government should finance and administer the programs? In the last section, we discuss future directions in research on poverty, anti-poverty, and poverty program development.

### Competencies addressed in course

#### 2.1.5: Advance human rights and social and economic justice.

- Understand the mechanisms of oppression and discrimination;
- Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice.
- Engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.

### Practice behaviors addressed in course

- Analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance social well-being.
- Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action.

### Assignment(s) measuring behavior

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IV. Class Session Topics and Readings

Week 1: January 19: Overview of the course
- expectations
- syllabus
- structure of class
- assignments

Week 2: January 26: “Pauperism”: Conceptions of the poor in 19th century America
- historical understanding of the poor
- historical explanations for poverty
- origins of “the deserving” and “undeserving poor”
- the relevance of gender in early relief systems

Readings:


Week 3: February 2: The modern welfare state, race and compromise
- race, politics and leverage
- how New Deal compromises influenced the Great Society programs
- War on Poverty – programs, approaches and policies
- what programs did we develop and why

Readings:


*Optional but strongly advised: Schedule a meeting with the TA to go over Assignment 1 topic

Week 4: February 9: Definitions and trends in poverty
- relative and absolute definitions of poverty
- the relationship between poverty measurement and societal goals
- U.S. poverty level and trends compared to similar nations
Readings:


Week 5: February 16: The significance of welfare reform in the poverty conversation
- the precursors to reform
- political alignments
- What do we know now, where can we go?

Readings:


Week 6: February 23: Employment and poverty: What are the issues?
- the working poor
- the nature of low-wage work

Readings:


Assignment 1 due in dropbox on Learn@UW by 1:20 on February 23 (Week 6).

Week 7: March 1: Race/ethnicity and poverty
- assessment of poverty research as an enterprise
- urban poverty: William Julius Wilson for the 21st century
- the role of context in poverty research and policymaking

Readings:


**Week 8: March 8: Theories of poverty: how place and space matter**

- the use of theory in the construction of poverty policy
- how place and space matter in poverty strategies
- urban, rural and suburban poverty

**Readings:**


**Week 9: March 15: Immigration, work and poverty**

- recent immigration trends in the United States
- immigrants and low-wage work
- health, housing and citizenship status

**Readings:**


**SPRING BREAK**
March 19 – March 27

**Week 10: March 29: Women and poverty: Caregiving, societal change and policy lag**

- What are the implications of unpaid household and caregiving labor?
- How have significant demographic changes affected the economic position of women?

**Readings:**
Assignment 2 due in dropbox on Learn@UW by 1:20 p.m. on March 29 (Week 10).

Week 11: April 5: Poverty during childhood: implications for policy

- dynamics of childhood poverty
- theoretical concerns
- challenges in studying childhood poverty and outcomes

Readings:


Week 12: April 12: Health, well-being and poverty

- the social determinants of health
- healthcare reform

Readings:


Week 13: April 19: Housing, race and poverty: a persistent knot

- housing as a “bundle”
- housing and well-being
- residential segregation and poverty

Readings:

Assignment 3 due in Dropbox on Learn@UW by 1:20 p.m. on April 19 (Week 13).

Week 14: April 26: Poverty alleviation policies/programs – ROUNDTABLES

CLASS PRESENTATIONS

Week 15: May 3: Poverty alleviation policies/programs – ROUNDTABLES

CLASS PRESENTATIONS

V. Texts and Reading Materials for the Course

There is no required text for this course.

ARTICLES: All articles are available in electronic (PDF) form on the SW420 “Learn@UW” webpage.

Course Web Site

Articles and additional class materials will be available on the class web site available through Learn@UW, which can be accessed from the academic tab in My UW (near the course descriptions) or https://learnuw.wisc.edu/. Use your net ID and password to log on to the class website. The website includes:

- Readings
- Course Announcements
- Syllabus

VI. Evaluation of Competencies and Practice Behaviors: Assignments, Grading and Methods

Students are expected to:

- Attend class weekly and read required material prior to class;
- Actively participate in class exercises
- Regularly check your university email account and the course website for communication from instructor and teaching assistant;
- Turn off all cell phones and beepers during the class
- Refrain from using laptops for purposes other than taking electronic notes during class and discussion section times;
- Complete 3 graded assignments and 1 presentation

Exams: There will be three written graded assignments and one presentation

Assignment 1: Poverty Problem and Target Policy/Program

Purpose:
The purpose of this assignment is to help you develop analytic skills to understand policies that address poverty. This is the first of 3 assignments, each sequentially designed to deepen your knowledge in an area of poverty that is most interesting to you. You will be given the opportunity to choose a poverty problem and program designed to address this need. Through each assignment you will increase your understanding of the dimensions of the problem and learn how to integrate various sources of knowledge (government reports, social science literature, evaluation reports) for the purpose of sound, relevant poverty policy analysis.

**Paper Requirements:**

This paper should be 5 pages in length. Format this assignment using one-inch margins, double-spacing, and Times New Roman 12-inch font. Pages should be numbered. All assignments should be checked thoroughly for correct spelling and grammar. You must use a minimum of 5 external references. Use APA style with in-text parenthetical references as well as a reference list. The reference list is not included in the page limit. Include a cover page with your name, paper title and course number.

**Due Date:**

Assignment 1 due in dropbox on Learn@UW by 1:20 p.m. on February 23 (Week 6). Late papers will not be accepted.

**Points:** 20

**Your paper should address these points:**

1) Identify an aspect of poverty that you are compelled to address with policy. Choose wisely as you will continue to analyze this poverty problem throughout the semester. Use high quality secondary sources (i.e. government reports, peer reviewed journal articles) to make the case that the problem you identified is important for policy to address.

2) Identify a (local, regional or federal) policy or program that is meant to address the aspect of poverty you have identified. Use high quality secondary sources to substantiate the link between the program you identify and its poverty reducing properties (i.e. why it works).

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**Assignment 2: Problem Statement**

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this assignment is to help you create a powerful and compelling problem statement. The difference between this assignment and the first is the clarity, logic and structure of your argument. You are given the opportunity to integrate various data sources that allow you to make a convincing case for why this problem matters. You accomplish this by focusing on the use of data to substantiate the prevalence/incidence, trends and changes over time in the problem as well as the impact on key demographic groups.
Paper Requirements:

This paper should be 2-3 pages in length. Format this assignment using one-inch margins, double-spacing, and Times New Roman 12-inch font. Pages should be numbered. All assignments should be checked thoroughly for correct spelling and grammar. You must use a minimum of 4 external references. Use APA style with in-text parenthetical references as well as a reference list. The reference list is not included in the page limit. Include a cover page with your name, paper title and course number.

Due Date:

Assignment 2 due in dropbox on Learn@UW by 1:20 p.m. on March 29 (Week 10). Late papers will not be accepted.

Points: 20

Your paper should address this outline in a narrative format:

1. Problem Statement
   a. Introduction of poverty problem
      i. Scope and nature of the problem
      ii. Prevalence/incidence, trends, changes over time
      iii. Impacts on key demographic groups

2. Social Policy/Program
   a. Introduce the policy/program that addresses the problem. It should flow logically from your problem statement.

Assignment 3: Poverty Policy/Program Analysis Paper

Purpose:

The purpose of this final assignment is to allow you to integrate all you have learned about the poverty problem and program you have chosen to focus on for the semester. Class lectures and exercises mirror the analytic tools you will use to build your own analysis.

Paper Requirements:

This paper should be 8-10 pages in length. WE WILL STOP READING AT THE 10TH PAGE. Format this assignment using one-inch margins, double-spacing, and Times New Roman 12-inch font. Pages should be numbered. All assignments should be checked thoroughly for correct spelling and grammar. You must use a minimum of 10 external references. Use APA style with in-text
Your paper should address this outline in narrative format:

1. Problem Statement
   a. Introduction of poverty problem
      i. Scope and nature of the problem
      ii. Prevalence/incidence, trends, changes over time
         iii. Impacts on key demographic groups

2. Social Program/Strategy
   b. Introduce the program you have chosen to address #1
      i. Discuss related attempts to address this problem through policy
      ii. Defend why you have chosen to focus on a.
   c. Context of Program/Strategy
      i. Origins of program/strategy
      ii. Current structure of program/strategy
         1. Delivery System (local/federal/state)
         2. Kind of benefit (cash/in-kind/social service)
         3. Funding Mechanism (who pays)
         4. Eligibility (What determines who receives services/assistance and how)

3. Evaluation of Program/Strategy
   d. Review of program/strategy evaluation or outcome studies in literature
      i. What is the evidence regarding effectiveness?
      ii. What are the strengths/weaknesses?
   e. Recommendations from literature review, and your supported analysis of the literature
      i. Elements of program/strategy that function effectively
      ii. Elements which should be changed or improved
         1. feasibility of suggested changes
   f. Brief summary
For a useful guide on APA documentation see the UW Writing Center web page (http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/DocAPA.html). Material that is not correctly cited is considered plagiarized and provides grounds for academic discipline. (see UW-Madison School of Social Work’s Policy on Plagiarism below).

Presentations: Poverty Elimination Roundtables

Each presenter will have 6-8 minutes to describe his or her program and why it matters in the poverty reduction conversation. Presenters should be prepared to take questions from the audience. Presentation guidelines will be provided in class.

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

Assignment 1: Poverty Problem and Target Policy/Program 20
Assignment 2: Problem Statement 20
Assignment 3: Poverty Policy/Program Analysis Paper 40
Poverty Elimination Roundtable Presentation 10
Attendance and participation in class exercises/discussion 10

Grading

Grades on each assignment and your final grade will be assigned as follows:

A  94-100 outstanding; surpasses expectations in all areas
AB  88-93 surpasses expectations in most areas
B  82-87 surpasses expectations in some areas
BC  76-81 meets expectations in most areas; above in others
C  70-75 meets expectations in most areas
D  64-69 below expectations in all areas
F  <64 fails to meet minimal expectations in all areas, not acceptable work

Attendance and Participation in Lecture and Class Exercises

Class will include group exercises designed to reinforce and deepen content covered in readings and lectures. Your preparedness and willingness to engage in each class determines the participation portion of your grade.

Note to Students

Your goal for this and other courses should be to make the most of your learning experience, and not simply “get an A”. Your expectations about the grades you receive on assignments should be wholly based on (1) the extent to which you respond accurately to assignment objectives, (2) the quality of your writing (to include grammar and spelling, organization and clarity), (3) the extent to which you demonstrate critical thinking related to course readings and topics, and (4) the extent and quality of your participation in class and group exercises. If there is something about an assignment that is unclear to you, it is your job to bring this to the attention of your teaching assistant or to the professor. Grade expectations should NOT be based on what you have received in other courses. If you have an issue with a grade you receive in this course, please document the reasons for your appeal in writing with specific attention to the four points raised above.
**Student Behavior Policy**

Respect, cordiality, patience and openness to the ideas of others are expected in lectures, discussion and group exercises. Learning requires the willingness to risk, the ability to listen as well as bravery to venture a reasoned opinion. We will create and maintain a climate where this is possible for all participants.

**Disability Accommodations**

Those students who are registered with the McBurney Center must give the instructor a copy of their VISA within the first two weeks of the semester so that any needed accommodations can be made. If the student has not given the copy of the VISA to the instructor, an accommodation will not be made.

**Academic Honesty**

Academic honesty is required and expected in this course and all other courses offered by the School of Social Work. If you are found to have plagiarized a written assignment or cheated on an exam, you will receive a failing grade for that assignment/exam and be subject to further disciplinary action consistent with the university and School of Social Work policy.

Academic honesty is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility to: (1) uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student’s own work; (2) refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the University community; and (3) foster a high sense of academic integrity and responsibility on the part of the University community.

Academic misconduct is often thought of as “cheating” in the pursuit of one’s academic endeavors. Academic misconduct rules are found in UWS 14. Information on academic misconduct rules and procedures and plagiarism can be found at the following websites:

http://students.wisc.edu/saja/index.html

College of Letters & Science Handbook definition of plagiarism as academic misconduct:
http://www.ls.wisc.edu/handbook/ChapterSix/chVI-11.htm

“Avoiding Plagiarism” from The Writing Center:
http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html

There are two major forms which plagiarism takes:
1. The use of direct quotes from others’ written or spoken work and presenting them as one’s own words without using proper quotation marks or offsetting.
   **Direct Quote:** To repeat verbatim or to copy verbatim the words of another.
2. The other major form of plagiarism where a student (or someone else) paraphrases the ideas or research findings of another person(s), but fails to identify the source of the ideas. A **paraphrase** is a restatement of a text or passage in another form or other words (i.e., putting into your own words the ideas of another person).
BSW and incoming MSW students read and signed electronic forms of the NASW Code of Ethics, the School of Social Work Plagiarism Policy and the Student Rights and Responsibilities. In doing so, they agreed that while in the BSW or MSW Program they would honor the NASW Code of Ethics and Student’s Rights and Responsibilities, as well as adhere to the Plagiarism Policy and that should they not do so, sanctions would be imposed. BSW and MSW students are expected to adhere to these policies in the classroom, in the field and in the preparation of course assignments.